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Transforming supply chain strategies

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John Adams, Senior Vice President & Managing Director of Transcontinental Advanced Coatings, discusses how his business segment is operating in the manufacturing industry amidst significant digital transformation

With the world's leading companies undergoing digital transformations to accelerate operations, it's becoming fundamental that businesses employ the latest technological advances to sustain success in the manufacturing industry. John Adams, Senior Vice President & Managing Director of the Advanced Coatings business segment within flexible packaging company TC Transcontinental, discusses his procurement strategy and how his team leverages technology to disrupt and lead the manufacturing sector. "Procurement has been critical to identifying partners that can enable us to achieve our productivity and innovation aspirations," explains Adams. "We're always looking at how we can enhance productivity and expand our capacity to enable growth. You can't have a strong growth strategy without a smart investment strategy."





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Senior Vice President & Managing Director
Transcontinental Advanced Coatings

With technology considered a key component of Transcontinental Advanced Coatings’ procurement strategy, Adams believes it’s important that his business segment utilize technology in the right way – especially when it comes to safety. “When we think about how we use technology, we think about what the strategic priorities of the business are and decide where we need to invest. Safety is always our top priority,” he says. “Since we use a range of solvent based techniques in our manufacturing processes, it is imperative that we ensure our work environments are safe from any risk of fire at all times.





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As a result, we invest in a range of technologies for the detection of different solvents, monitoring of humidity control, dissipation of static throughout the production line, and the safeguarding of equipment to make sure that we have a safe environment.”

OPERATING IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR

Transcontinental Advanced Coatings operates ISO-certified manufacturing facilities at its headquarters in Matthews, North Carolina, and its UK plant in Wrexham, North Wales. Also,

the business operates a converting and distribution facility in China, serving its customers on a global scale. Having been with the company since March 2016, Adams is proud of the considerable growth achieved in the past three years. “When I joined, it was clear to me there was the potential for large expansion of the business, primarily due to the nature of the key market segments we serve,” says Adams. “Approximately half of our business globally is tied to the medical segment, inclusive of advanced wound care products. With favorable global



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growth trends in healthcare, inclusive of a growing aging population and increased access to medical care, that segment represents an expanding market worldwide – it's a great area to be a market leader in."

To set TC Transcontinental apart from rivals, Adams understands the requirements of his customers to ensure the business can continue to transform in an ever-changing market. "We're able to work intimately with our customers to develop and commercialize differentiated solutions, rather than just being a commodity product supplier," says Adams. "With lithium-

ion batteries on an explosive growth trajectory, we've started to think about things such as consumer electronics, cell phones, and the automobile space. I think it's important to consider the key drivers of segment growth and the underlying fundamentals of the business. What do people want? For example, they want a phone to charge faster and for the charge to last longer. We work with customers to create energy storage solutions for such products. We can apply very thin coatings to substrates that become the building blocks for power transmission and storage devices."

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

John Adams, Senior Vice President & Managing Director

John Adams joined Coveris Americas in 2016 as the Vice-President of Sales and Marketing for the global Advanced Coatings business and was promoted to the Vice-President and Managing Director role for the organization later that year. Following the acquisition of Coveris Americas by TC Transcontinental in 2018, John was named Senior Vice-President and Managing Director of the Advanced Coatings business segment. Before joining TC Transcontinental, John spent over five years with Danaher Corporation as a Vice-President of Sales and Marketing for a global industrial controls business group comprised of 6 business units covering the Americas, Europe, and Asia. Also, he spent over 15 years at Teradyne, Inc., holding roles of increasing responsibility in engineering, marketing, and general management. He holds a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and an M.S. in Manufacturing Engineering and an MBA from Boston University.



ESTABLISHING KEY PARTNERSHIPS

In May 2018, TC Transcontinental completed the acquisition of Coveris Americas, inclusive of the Advanced Coatings business segment. Recognized as one of the top 10 converters of flexible packaging and other value-added products in North America, Coveris Americas manufactured a range of flexible plastic and paper products such as bags and pouches, shrink films, coextruded films and coated substrates and labels. “TC Transcontinental had been focused on diversifying its printing and media assets to ensure its long-term growth and initiated its strategic shift in 2014 with a first acquisition in the flexible packaging industry,” explains Adams. “That leveraged manufacturing as their core competency and they invested in approximately six smaller acquisitions, generating about CAD \$300mn in annual revenues. When Coveris Americas became available; it was a great opportunity for TC Transcontinental to continue the transformation of the company. Now, packaging is the largest sector of TC Transcontinental, and it’s become the engine of the company’s strategic





\$2.6bn

Approximate revenue (CAD)

1976

Year founded

9,000

Approximate number of employees

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—
John Adams,
Senior Vice President & Managing Director
Transcontinental Advanced Coatings

shift. The Coveris Americas acquisition has allowed the company to become a leader in the North American flexible packaging market, and provides a strong, stable environment for us to continue our growth.”

Transcontinental Advanced Coatings business is in a rapid growth phase, and as a result is focused on optimizing the performance of existing operations, and making the strategic investments necessary to enable growth. As an example, with safety as a top priority, TC Transcontinental has established a critical partnership with EW Process and Control Instruments

to aid with solvent vapor monitoring. “EW Process has been able to monitor the full range of solvent products that we use to ensure we don’t have any issues,” says Adams. “In our operations, safety is always our number one priority. Control Instruments is the one supplier we can depend on to provide comprehensive LEL sensing solutions that ensure the full range of solvent vapors resulting from production are precisely monitored through the equipment. This capability is paramount to ensuring we have no risk of combustion prior to exhaust entering our thermal oxidizer for final destruction.”

REMAINING SUSTAINABLE

With sustainability crucial to the long term growth of all businesses, TC Transcontinental has several targets in mind in a bid to continue to thrive in the manufacturing industry. “It’s about having a strategy rooted in strategic markets, and ensuring that the segments we’re in have fundamentally sustainable long-term growth trends. As an ISO certified company, we ensure we have a high degree of process control, and explicitly prioritize where we will grow and

invest, and where we will not.”

To achieve a sustainable future, TC Transcontinental values the importance of building and developing a capable team to deliver a market-leading level of customer intimacy and responsiveness, staying ahead of rivals technologically, and achieving mutual and collaborative success with our customers. “It’s important that we recruit strong people and put a lot of energy into building, investing and helping our associates to stay ahead of the curve, in terms of training and capabilities,” explains Adams. “We’re constantly bringing in new hires from universities to provide us with new ways of thinking. Thanks to this talent, combined with the best new technologies, we are innovating and developing next-generation environmentally sustainable solutions. TC Transcontinental’s unwavering commitment towards sustainability means that we are always looking at limiting our environment footprint and reducing waste.”

New technologies are critical to staying ahead of the curve in terms of quality and delivery performance. “Two key capital investment strategies involve the implementation of in-line





vision systems, ensuring 100% visual inspection of our products throughout the production process, and deployment of IoT 4.0 technologies, providing us with advanced notice of impending capital maintenance needs to minimize unplanned downtime and optimize maintenance spending,” notes Adams.

Looking to the future, Adams believes there is significant room for Transcontinental Advanced Coatings to grow over the next few years.

“We see the opportunities for substantial organic growth, and we intend to add additional capacity to our coating facilities in the near and mid-term as we optimize utilization of our existing capacity,” summarizes Adams. “Many of the partnerships that we have are long-lasting, and we continue to build off that as well as part of our growth strategy to help support our partners in the next generation of developments.” ■



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